



State Library of Massachusetts - Special Collections Department

Ms. Coll. 40

Gender Bias Study Committee Records, 1986-1990: Guide

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator: Massachusetts. Supreme Judicial Court. Gender Bias Study Committee.

Call Number: Ms. Coll. 40

Extent: 2 boxes (2 linear feet)

Preferred Citation Style: *Folder Title, Box Number #.* Gender Bias Study Committee Records.
State Library of Massachusetts Special Collections.

About This Finding Aid: Description based on DACS.

Provenance: Received from Gladys Maged and Lois Frankel, Committee for Gender Equality, 1990.

Processed by: Finding aid prepared by Brenda Howitson, July 15, 1991. Updated by Abigail Cramer, April, 2012.

Abstract: This collection documents the activities of the Gender Bias Study Committee in its efforts to investigate gender bias in the judiciary and make recommendations to promote fair and equal treatment regardless of gender.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The materials in this collection include the working files from the office of the Executive Director of the Gender Bias Study Committee. The collection includes general information on the gender bias study, including research planning and projects, outlines of report proposals, results of regional meetings, articles and newsletters and information for the press. It also includes written complaints received by the Committee and materials from the four Gender Bias Subcommittees.

Additional materials include results of various surveys conducted by the Committee and information about the public hearings held in various parts of the state.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Gender Bias Study Committee was established in 1986, pursuant to an appropriation (St. 1986, c. 279) to the Supreme Judicial Court. The Committee's mandate was to study the nature of and consequences of gender bias in the judiciary and to make recommendations to promote the fair and equal treatment between genders. Chief Justice Edward F. Hennessey and the justices of the Supreme Judicial Court appointed the members of the Committee in December, 1986. Chief Justice Hennessey served as Honorary Chair; the Honorable Ruth I. Abrams, Associate Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, and the Honorable John M. Greaney, Chief Justice of the Appeals Court, served as Co-Chairs of the Committee. The Committee included leaders of bar associations, justices from several courts, leaders of relevant citizens' organizations and male and female attorneys. In addition to the Committee, an executive director, Gladys Maged, was appointed, and staff was hired to guide the research and to perform specialized research methodology. Social scientists from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women were engaged, and with their help 30 different research projects were designed and completed, including surveys, interviews and record searches. The original thirty-eight-member committee was organized into four subcommittees and was augmented by the addition of sixty people who volunteered to serve on the subcommittees. The following subcommittees were established: the Subcommittee on Court Administration and Personnel, the Subcommittee on Gender and Economics, the Subcommittee on Gender in the Courts, and the Subcommittee on Gender, Violence and the Courts.

The subcommittees undertook studies of various aspects of the issue of gender bias. The Subcommittee on Court Administration performed a statistical analysis of the judicial work force, and undertook a pay equity study and an employment survey. The Subcommittee on Gender and Economics surveyed family law attorneys, conducted an interview study of divorce and custody, and examined gender bias in civil damage awards. The Subcommittee on Gender in the Courts conducted a "Day in the Courts," in which a questionnaire was distributed to everyone entering the courts. Surveys of attorneys, jurors and judges were also conducted. The Subcommittee on Gender, Violence and the Courts organized a court records study and a survey of district attorneys and public defenders.

The various activities of the Committee led to investigation of the issues of alimony, child support and child custody, violence in domestic situations involving sexual assault, and the treatment of female offenders in the criminal justice system. The study of adults in the criminal justice system

focused on bail, sentencing and probation. Research conducted during the course of the Committee's work was also intended to determine if the amount of damages awarded in civil actions depended upon whether the plaintiff was male or female. Gender bias in courthouse interactions involved the study of women in the courts as employment practices of the courts were reviewed to determine which practices might indicate active discrimination, especially job segregation.

In addition to the research that was conducted by the Committee, public hearings were held in 1987 and 1988 in Springfield, Boston, and Worcester. The Committee issued two reports: "Status Report, Gender Bias Study of the Supreme Judicial Court, 1988" and "Report of the Gender Bias Study of the Supreme Judicial Court, 1989." To oversee implementation of the recommendations set forth in the Report, it was suggested that the Supreme Judicial Court appoint a Commission to Eliminate Gender Bias in the Court.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Arrangement

The papers are arranged in six series as follows:

Series I: Administrative Materials

Series II: Written Complaints

Series III: Subcommittees

Series IV: Gender Violence and the Courts

Series V: Surveys

Series VI: Public Hearings

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research during the Special Collections Department's regular hours.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with Special Collections staff.

Languages and Scripts

The materials are entirely in English.

Custodial History

Much of the collection consists of photocopies made from the original materials; the originals remained in the custody of the Committee for Gender Equality at the time this finding aid was created (1991).

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Received from Gladys Maged and Lois Frankel, Committee for Gender Equality, 1990.

Series Description and Container List

Series I: Administrative Materials

Scope and Content

The materials in this series include the working files from the office of the Executive Director of the Gender Bias Study Committee, including research planning and projects, outlines of report proposals, results of regional meetings, articles and newsletters and information for the press.

Arrangement

The materials in this series are arranged in their original order.

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	1	General Information on Gender Bias Study
1	2-3	Coordinating Committee
1	4	Miscellaneous Forms, Guidelines
1	5	Research Proposals
1	6	Proposals
1	7	Research Planning
1	8	Research Project
1	9	Gender Bias: Full Committee
1	10	Report Guidelines
1	11	Report Miscellany
1	12	Report Miscellany: Time Lines, Subcommittee Packets
1	13	Comments on Report Drafts

1	14	Report Release: Lists and Miscellany
1	15	Report Release
1	16-18	Regional Meetings
1	19	Regional Meetings: Boston
1	20	Regional Meetings: Northampton
1	21	Regional Meetings: Salem
1	22	Regional Meetings: Worcester and New Bedford
1	23	Regional Meetings: Sexual Assault Regional Meeting
1	24-25	Articles: Gender Bias Study
1	26	Newsletters
1	27	Packet for Speakers
1	28	Press and Speeches: Media List and Letters
1	29	Press and Speeches: Press Committee Members

Series II: Written Complaints

Scope and Content

This series is made up of written complaints received by the Committee.

Arrangement

The materials in this series are arranged in their original order.

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	30	Written Complaints
1	31	Gender Bias: Written Complaints, Written Testimony, Assorted Papers and Letters
1	32	Gender Bias: Written Complaints, Personnel
1	33	Gender Bias: Written Complaints, Sent to Economic Subcommittee
1	34-35	Gender Bias: Written Complaints

Series III: Subcommittees

Scope and Content

This series includes materials documenting the four Gender Bias Subcommittees.

Arrangement

The materials in this series are arranged in their original order.

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	36-37	Gender Bias: Written Complaints, Economic Subcommittee
1	38	Written Complaints: Gender in Courts
1	39	Gender Bias: Written Complaints, GVC
1	40-41	Court Administration and Personnel Subcommittee
1	42	Court Administration and Personnel: Judicial Appointments
1	43	Court Administration and Personnel: Pay Equity
1	44	Court Administration and Personnel: Working Conditions Background
1	45	Court Administration and Personnel: EEO
1	46-48	Gender and Economics Subcommittee
1	49	Gender and Economics: Divorce Court Records
1	50	Gender and Economics: Civil Damages, Jury Study
1	51	Gender and Economics: Civil Damages Working Group
1	52	Gender and Economics: Report Marital Property Division
1	53	Gender and Economics: Child Custody
1	54	Gender and Economics: Child Support Working Group
1	55-56	Gender in the Courts Subcommittee
1	57	Gender in the Courts: Fee Generating Appointments
1	58	Gender in the Courts: Confidential Testimony Sessions
1	59	Gender in the Courts: Attorneys' Listening Sessions
1	60-61	Gender in the Courts: Day in the Courts
1	62	Gender in the Courts Subcommittee

Series IV: Gender Violence and the Courts

Scope and Content

This series includes materials related to gender violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault.

Arrangement

The materials in this series are arranged in their original order.

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
2	63	General
2	64	Criminal Justice/Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Offenders
2	65	Criminal Justice/Juvenile Justice, Adult Offenders
2	66	Domestic Violence
2	67	Sexual Assault

Series V: Surveys

Scope and Content

This series includes surveys conducted by the Committee. Researchers should consult the "Methodologies" appendix of the "Report of the Gender Bias Study of the Supreme Judicial Court, 1989" for a description of the various studies, surveys, and interviews in this series.

Arrangement

The materials in this series are arranged in their original order.

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
2	68	Attorneys' Survey
2	69	Attorneys' Survey: Comments
2	70	District Attorney/Public Defenders' Survey
2	71	Employee Survey
2	72	Family Law Survey Report
2	73	Judges' Survey
2	74	Judges' Survey: Other States
2	75	Jurors' Survey Report

Series VI: Public Hearings

Scope and Content

This series includes documentation of the public hearings held by the Commission in various parts of the state.

Arrangement

The materials in this series are arranged in their original order.

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
2	76	Boston Public Hearings
2	77	Boston Public Hearings: Correspondence
2	78	Boston Public Hearings: Registrants
2	79	Boston Public Hearings
2	80	Western Massachusetts Public Hearings
2	81	Western Massachusetts Public Hearings: Correspondence
2	82	Western Massachusetts Public Hearings: Memoranda
2	83	Western Massachusetts Public Hearings: Pittsfield Mini-Hearing
2	84	Worcester Public Hearing (5 folders)